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FBIS-1180/85
30 AUG 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Science and Technology

FROM: [redacted]

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Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

REFERENCE: EA/DS&T Memo for D/FBIS, Subj. IG Report on Language

SUBJECT: S&T Comments on Draft IG Report on Language in the Agency

1. The appropriate DS&T components (FBIS, OTS, OSO) essentially agree with the basic thrust of the recommendations of the IG's "Draft Report on Language in the Agency." Although the recommendations focus largely on the DO and the Language School, references to DS&T equities in the discussion leading up to these recommendations caused some concern among affected DS&T managers. This memorandum addresses these concerns.

2. We feel that the Inspection team may have relied heavily on the 1980 study of language in the Agency conducted by National Academy of Public Administration. This study, while having some merit at the time, is five years old and does not, of course, reflect changes that have been made in the Language School or in the procedures for administering language matters developed subsequently by the individual directorates. There is a feeling that the reading of the study early on preconditioned some of the thinking of the IG team.

3. We support the proposition that the effectiveness of the Language Incentive Program (LIP) should be reviewed in two years (Recommendation 5b.). Nevertheless, we were surprised by the negative tone of the report in discussing the revised LIP. The interest of all concerned might be better served by a more detailed presentation of the rationale and intent of the revisions, rather than random citations of experiences under the previous LIP as a benchmark for judging the potential for success of the current program. This is particularly true since the statistics cited (p. 67) to show the ineffectiveness of the previous LIP do not (and cannot) address the question of to what degree the program may have worked to prevent an even greater erosion of language skills in the Agency.

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4. We agree with the inspectors on the need for working on language development as a "total program" (p. 74). At the same time, we see the LIP and the Unit Language Requirement (ULR) positions at headquarters as an integral and vital part of that program. Similarly, the flexibility in the revised program enabling each directorate to administer an LIP "pegged to its mission and functions" seems to us to be one of the strongest aspects of the program. LIP standards need to address the varying needs within each directorate. The DS&T's language requirements differ from those of the DI, whose needs in turn differ from those of the DO. Within DS&T, the needs of OSO, OTS, and FBIS are often quite different. It is doubtful that a single standard could meet the language requirements within DS&T, much less throughout the Agency.

5. The report underplays the potential importance of the ULR positions to the Agency in attracting individuals to and retaining them in jobs that require the use of foreign languages. This is especially true for FBIS. We do not view the ULR positions as a substitute for higher grades for FBIS' language-qualified personnel, as the report implies (p. 73), but rather see the use award as both a recognition of the importance the Agency attaches to language skills and an inducement for personnel to remain in positions that promote the continuing use and refinement of such skills. FBIS' Production Group Intelligence Officers (IOs) furnish a wide array of linguistic and substantive services and support to components throughout the Agency. In this role, they represent one of the primary groups toward which any Agency-wide program to improve and enhance language capability must be directed.

6. One area of misconception on the part of the inspectors that we want to clear up concerns the discussion (p. 22) of FBIS management's attitude toward language training. The figures cited for achievement/maintenance awards in FY 1984 are not a good measure of FBIS management's commitment to language training. The figures are for a period when no achievement awards were being made to individuals in the language for which they were hired. This policy was linked with the decision made in 1981 to exclude FBIS Production Group officers from the Language Use Award program. At present, there are 145 enrollments from FBIS Production Group in the achievement program. Moreover, a better indication of FBIS management's commitment is the number of FBIS employees taking language training. In FY 1984, 36 IOs took Agency-sponsored training. Of this number, 21 were in OT&E courses and 15 in courses conducted in-house at FBIS. Five others were in FBIS-sponsored external language programs. In FY 1985, FBIS' request to OT&E was for 26 classes for 45 people. OT&E was able to establish only 8 classes for 13 people; three of these classes ended prematurely when the instructors had to undertake other assignments. In this same period, FBIS conducted two classes in-house for 10 individuals. FBIS has requested training for 78 people in FY 1986.

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7. The concerned S&T managers support a broadscale enhancement of OT&E's language training capability. They believe, however, that a significant change in focus at the Language School would have to be made before it could be expected to address fully the directorate's varied needs. OSO, OTS and FBIS language training requirements differ significantly from the DO's. In particular, the requirements among S&T components for the more exotic languages go well beyond the scope of what is practical for the Language School to undertake. Additionally, FBIS requirements can to a degree be viewed as beginning where those of others end; that is, FBIS often needs to enhance the skills of individuals who are already at or beyond the 3 level in the language concerned. We believe it likely that S&T components will continue to have substantial language training requirements that will need funding outside the Language School framework.

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cc: D/OTS
D/OSO

DDS&T/FBIS/Prod/ [redacted] (29 Aug85)

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